

# Open Confessor

AND THE

## FREE PRISONER.

JOHN 18:37. 1 TIM. 6:13.

*For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the World, that I should bear witness unto the truth; Every one that is of the Truth, heareth my voice.*

These were the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he witnessed a good Confession, or Profession, before Pontius Pilate.

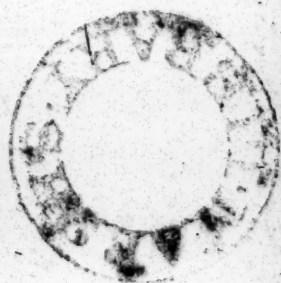
By F. B. the Lords Prisoner in Salisbury.

READER,

If thou wouldst know the Reason of Mr. Bampfield's Letter being made Publick, it is to satisfy the desires of many that were earnest to have Copies thereof, and to prevent the trouble of Transcribing; some, (to whom it was sent,) have Prevailed with the worthy Author to give his Assent for the Publishing hereof.

The AUTHOR had Annexed a Choice Hymn, which we have omitted, being straitned.

L O N D O N, Printed in the YEAR. 1675.



## The Open Confessour, and the Free Prisoner.

*To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and Preserved in Christ Jesus, and called, Mercy unto you, and Peace, and Love be Multiplied.*

**D**Early Beloved in our Lord, having obtained help of God, I continue witnessing unto this day, that Jesus Christ is the one, and the only LORD over the conscience, and Lawgiver to the soul. And that the Scriptures of Truth are the one, and the only Rule of Faith, Worship, and Life, for this cause I have once more the honour of being the LORDs Prisoner, and my Ten days (a day for a year) are now accomplished: *Rev. 2. 10.* In this I rejoyce, and am made exceeding glad, one of the main Trials, which I have been exercised withall, For divers of these late years has been to suffer the Contradictions of censures; one instance of this has been, that I delayed to come into the Country for fear of Persecution, whereas, upon my coming down, some others have charged me, that I ran my self into trouble, and thought I was never well till I was in a Prison. As to the former of these objections, what I formerly suffered in the Country by three imprisonments, one whereof continued for eight years, and about three quarters, besides other hardships, and my exposing my self to dangers in the great City of London, and my open appearing for Christ, as I have been Traveling along thus farre, and in this City where I am now under Confinement at *Sarum*, should be admitted as a sufficient Confutation by all whose minds are unprejudiced, and who will Judge Righteous Judgment according to the Word.

It is the latter of those accusations which doth call for my present Apology, *1 Cor. 9. 3, 16. 17.*

The case both for matter of Fact, and for matter of Right in short is this, being in a Congregation in a former part of the day, one came up to me as I was in the Pew, and asked of me whether I would Preach in the afternoon unto the people, I answered him, if the people assembled did desire it, and the Lord gave me strength, I had not an heart to deny the n;

clear



clear upon the place, in a solemn publick way by the joynt desire of those who were assembled. *Acts. 13. 15, 16, &c.* Here therefore were defence enough, although no more were written about it.

But further yet, doth not the order of the *Links* in the *Chain* of love Plead this cause. The glory of the Lord is the highest *Link*, next to that the Salvation of my own soul, then the Salvation of my Brothers soul, afterwards the Life of my own body, then the Life of my Brothers body; below these are my own, and then my Brothers or Neighbours Name. Goods, Liberty, who sees not here, that my liberty is not far inferiour to the Salvation of the souls of others. *Acts. 20. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 21. 11, 12, 13, 14. Rom. 1. 2, 3, 2 Cor. 12. 15. 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12. Col. 1. 24.* The Lord Christ inwardly inabling of me; I am made willing very gladly to spend, and to be spent for the service of souls; if I suffer trouble, and endure imprisonment, it is for the Elects sake, that they may also obtain the Salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with Eternall glory; I rejoyce in my sufferings for them, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body sake which is the Church, Souls, Souls, precious Souls, watch for our souls, as one that must give accompt, come over and help us; this is a sound that is loud in mine Ears, and I may not be deaf against it. *Heb. 13. 17. Acts. 16. 9, 10.*

These Scripture-Exemplars, whom I am to follow, do lead me on in this way: *Jehovah* Christ, who is the great Exemplar, when once entred upon the discharge of his publick Ministeriall Office, he went about doing good. *Acts. 10. 38.* Though *John* was cast into Prison but a little before for his Faithfulness. *Mat. 4. 12, 17, 23.* He went about all *Galilee*, Teaching in their Synagogues, and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom; so in other parts of the Country. *Luke 10. 1.* And when he was at *Jerusalem*, he was daily with the People in the Temple, teaching of them, *Luke. 22. 53. and 19. 47.* Notwithstanding that, he foresaw, and often foretold of his sufferings there, *Mat. 16. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. Mar. 8. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.* He was a Prisoner. *Esa. 53. 8.* And he knows the heart of a Prisoner. *Heb. 2. 17. 18.* And he is in Prison where he has any suffering Saints under Confinement, *Mar. 25. 36.* He witnessed a good Confession before *Pontius Pilate*, *1 Tim. 6. 13.* And so have his holy Prophets and Apostles done before Magistrates, as they have had a call, and as he

has drawn forth such Martyrs openly, to bring in their testimony for him, and to be finishing of that testimony with the laying down of their liberties, and of their lives. *Mat.* 23. 34. 35. 36. 37. *Luk.* 11. 49, 50, 51. *Rev.* 2. 10. and 12. 11. and 6. 11. and 7. 13, 14. and 18. 24. How bold was *Jeremiah*, and how open in his Preaching, though for this, he be apprehended, Indicted, arraigned, cast into Prison, and threatned to have his life taken from him, yet still he goes on in the faithful discharge of his Office, *Jerem.* 1. 17, 18, 19, and Chap. 26, thorowout, and 32. 1, 2, 3, and 33. 1. and 37. 16. and Chap. 38. thorowout, how undaunted the Courage of *Peter* and of *Paul* was, in the cause of their Lord and Master, the History of the *Acts* of the Apostles is full of, Chap. 4. from the 1. to the 31. Verse and Chap. 5. from 17. Verse, to the end. As soon as they had liberty, dayly in the Temple, and in every house the Apostles ceased not to teach and Preach Jesus Christ, *Acts.* 9. 20, 21, 22, 23, and 14. 1, 2, 3, and 16. 19. to the end, and 17. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 18. 12, 13. and 20. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and so onwards to the end of this History, *2 Cor.* 11. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 6. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. 9, 10, 11, *Eph.* 4. 1. *Phil.* 1. 12, 13, 14, 28. 29. *Col.* 4. 3, 10, 18. *1 Thes.* 2. 2. *2 Tim.* 4. 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. All the sufferings of *Paul* did not silence him, but, as he had opportunity, he spake boldly in the Lord, who gave testimony unto the word of his grace; thus he finished his course, and kept the Faith, having a Crown of Righteousness laid up for him, which the Lord the Righteous Judge hath given unto him, these are holy examples worthy of my imitation.

The Office and Work of the Ministry doth call aloud for open Preaching, free to all Comers: how shall Sinners be Converted, if we shut them out from our assemblings for worship? whereas we know not but those are they, whom the Lord will most teach to profit: which way shall our gathered Churches be supplied, if care be not taken that others be added to them? Particular Church-Officers and Members do dye away; and if there be not a new born people prepared for the Lord, and made ready for that end, what will become of our Churches in a Generation or too? *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. *Acts.* 2. 47 and 26. 16, 17, 18, *1 Cor.* 14. 23, 24, 25. How can the yearning Bowels of a Gospel Minister, but shew Compassion towards perishing sinners? *Mat.* 9. 35, 36. *Psalm.* 1. 8. Is not the harvest of souls plenteous: and would not the Lord of the harvest have his Servants to be Labourers there? O, for Prayers of faith to be made unto him, that he would thrust forth Labourers into his harvest. *Mat.* 9. 37, 38.



Hath not our Lord and Master forewarn'd his Messenger, and Disciples of the danger and Tribulations which they must count upon, who would be thorow in their following of him: yet he requires them to Preach as they did go here and there, to speak openly in the light, and to Preach upon the house tops, and to confess Christ before men, though he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of Wolves; and men would deliver them up to the counsels, and they would scourge them in their Synagogues and they should be brought before Governors and Kings for Christs sake, for a testimony against them; and though they would be hated of all men for Christs Name, Persecuted they would be, yet must they not fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, see *Mat. 10.* thorowout.

More of the holy fear of God would either prevent or remedy the sinful fear of men; Christs Ministers and Messengers should not decline any duty through carnal fear; it is one great design of the persecuting Enemy to hurry us into that distempered passion; they would put us in fear that we might sin, and they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach us; and what is worse, that they might reproach our God: I would not write this out of any self-confidence, but to declare that which is *Jehovah's* command and our duty: for who or what am I, if left to myself, any longer than I have supplies of grace, and of strength, from the holy Spirit? I cannot stand before my own fears, even those of them that are causeless ones, my own thoughts would quickly overbear and overwhelm me; every difficultie would be too hard, and every cross would be too heavie; if at any time I stand, it is by faith, I may not be high-minded but must fear, with an holy fear, with the fear of *Jehovah* in my heart, that I may not depart from him. *Peters* eminent grace was holy boldness for Christ, and yet he quickly failed in this grace, wherein he did so excel, and that shortly after he put forth some choice expressings and actings of that grace; as much as *Paul* was a man of courage in the Cause of Christ, yet he humbly acknowledgeth his own weakness and nothingness in all his labourings and sufferings for his LORD, denying himself as to any sharing in any of that honour, which in the whole of it was due to Christ: *I*, saith he, yet not *I*, but the grace of God which was with me; *I* am crucified with Christ, nevertheless *I* live, yet not *I*, but Christ liveth in me; It was in the grace that is in Christ Jesus that *Paul* was strong; it was Christs grace that

that was sufficient for *Paul*, for Christs strength was made perfect in weakness; Most gladly therefore did he rather glory in his infirmities, that the Power of Christ might rest, or tabernacle, or tent upon him: therefore he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses for Christs sake; for when he was weak then was he strong, and he could do all things through Christ inwardly enabling of him; none of the threatened or inflicted bonds or afflictions moved him; neither counted he his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy; And the Ministry which he had received of the LORD Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, the fear of man bringeth a snare, but, who putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe, he shall be set on high; I, saith Jehovah, I, he who comforteth you; O my People, who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made as grass, and forgettest Jehovah thy Maker, who hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth, and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the Oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy; and where is the fury of the Oppressor? If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the LORD God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an Answer by way of Apologie, to every man that asketh you a reason, (or rather a Word, for, Word-Reasons, Scripture-Accounts are the best Reasons and Accounts) of the hope that is in you, with meekness and reverence, having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed, that falsely accuse your good Conversation in Christ, be in nothing terrified by your Adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition but to you (unto whom its given in the behalfe of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake) of Salvation, and that of God; Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, behold the Devil will cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life, saith Truth it self, who would fear a Cross that believes a Crown, or dread a Prison, that expects a Palace? Mat. 10. 26. 28. 31. Neh. 6. 9. 13. 14. Rom. 11. 20. Jerem. 32. 40. 1 Cor. 15. 10. Gal. 2. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10, 11. Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13. Acts. 20. 22, 23, 24. Prov. 29. 25. Ecl. 51. 12, 13. 1 Pet. 3. 14, 15, 16. Phil. 1. 28. 29. Rev. 2. 10. A noble free Princely Spirit in a believer, should gather Courage in the face of opposition; Faith is a victorious grace, & shal overcome the whole world of enemies, it sets its



conquering foot upon their necks, & triumphs over them all Jo. 5. 4, 5

How precious are the Promises, how glorious the reward, which Christ hath made over unto those that are faithful witnesses for him, and constant Confessors of him; were those more powerfully believed, and more practically employed, they would raise an holily affecting spirit above his Trouble and Prison, which otherwise would be afflictive to the outer man. O, what nourishing good doth a sweet Meditation upon these Honours and Gifts, these Dignities and Favours afford the Lords Prisoner night and day! how reviving, how satiating is it to hear this pleasant voice of the Saints best beloved, *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you lying for my sake; Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you; Blessed are they who are Persecuted for Righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* When a fiery Trial doth try us, we should rejoyce in as much as we are Partakers of Christs sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy; If we be reproached for the Name of Christ, O how happy: for, the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon such, if we suffer as Christians; both for the cause and manner of suffering, let us not be ashamed, but, let us glorify God on this behalf; let us hold fast Christs Name, and not deny his faith, that no man take our Crown; did we more live above in beatifick Visions, and keep more in the heavenly Glorie, how melodious would our Chirps be in our Cages, *Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12. 1 Pet. 4. 13, 14, 16. Rev. 2. 13. and 3. 11.* the Promises are made to the overcoming ones, *R. v. 2. 7, 11, 17, 26. and 3. 5, 12, 21.*

Our LORD will come quickly, and the Prayings and Groanings of his Prisoners shall under him do somewhat towards the bringing forth of the later-day glory; *Psal. 102. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.* In the hope of this I rejoyce, and for the Accomplishment of this desire I wait; it will be a tree of life: O sing we to *Jehovah* a new Song, give we unto him the Glory of his Name! let the Heavens rejoyce, and let the Earth be glad before *Jehovah*, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the Earth; He shall judge the World with Righteousness, and the People with his Truth. O how blessed will the eyes of those believers be, who shall see the King of Saints in his Beauty, and *Sion* in her glory! O when once shall the New Heavens and the New Earth appear! when

will

will the New City come down from out of Heaven, that Christ and his Saints may be together; then will *Jehovah* loose the Prisoners, *Jehovah shall reign for ever, thy God, O Sion, unto all Generations.* *Hallelujah*, how glorious will that liberty of the sons of God then be, which the whole Creation now waiteth for, *Psal.* 146. 7. 10. *Rom.* 8. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. How much louder and further doth my Confinement Preach, then my liberty could; my Prison always speaks, even when the Pulpit is silent, *Phil.* 1. 12. 13, 14. The Word of my God is not bound, though I am shut up; that shall run. and have free course and be glorified, though I am kept within bounds, *2Tim.* 2. 9. *2Thes.* 3. the most watchful Keeper of the Goal cannot hinder the Walks of my soul, and the flights of my Spirit: with these I can quickly get over the walls of stone, and thorow the grates of Iron; how soon can I in my thoughts out-travel the speediest Post; I can in one step get over all the *Salisbury-Plains* & be presently in the royal City of the nation, where is much dirt and more Sin; and when I have mourned over it a while, I feel my self suddenly called, and Charioted up into a better place, into the glorious City, and the heavenly Country, where all is pure and peacefull, holy and happy, where the worship is Free, and the Enjoyment is full, where the Visions are open-faced, and the Praise is glorious? How high above my Prison am I then carried upon wings of Faith and of Love. Then could I shout and Sing, and bare a part in the holy Melodiousness with the glorified ones above, if Christ my Advocate will own me, and plead for me there, and will at the last confess me before his Father who is in Heaven, why should I be troubled at it, that the undiscerning unkind world doth reject and condemn me now, *Mat.* 10. 32.

O the mutual earnest breathings, and holy longings, that are between Christ and Believers, that he and they may be more together, ever together; *Rev.* 22. 7, 12, 17, 20, 21. *John.* 17. 20, 21, 24. and 14. 2, 3. *2Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *1Thes.* 4. 17. *Phil.* 1. 23. *Song of Songs*, thorowout O Grace to be exalted! O Love to be embraced! O Kindness to be admired! O how much should the God and the Giver, the Purchaser and the Applyer, the Witnesser and the Sealer of all this be Adored, Honoured, and Praised! what tongue can express the whole of those mutual movings of heart and workings of Spirit, that are between Christ and his Friends! they walk together, they dwell together, they converse with one another, they rest in each other, silent in loves! Time shall never wholly part them here, and Eternity shall keep them ever ever together hereafter.

F I N I S.